

REMARKS

Please reconsider the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 4, 6-12, 15, 17-20, and 23-24 include allowable subject matter and for carefully considering this application.

Disposition of Claims

Claims 1-24 were pending in the application. Claims 3-5, 13, and 23 have been cancelled by this reply without prejudice or disclaimer. Accordingly, claims 1-2, 6-12, 14-22, and 24 remain pending in this application. Claims 1, 16, and 21 are independent. The remaining claims depend, directly or indirectly, from the independent claims.

Claim Amendments

Claims 3-5, 13, and 23 are cancelled by this reply without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1, 6, 8, 10, 12, 16-18, 21, and 24 have been amended by this reply. Claim 1 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter claim 4, as well as the intervening claim, claim 3. Claims 16 and 21 have been amended to include the allowable subject matter of claim 23. Accordingly, amended independent claims 1, 16, and 21 are now allowable. Claims 6, 8, 10, 12, 17-18, and 24 have been amended to resolve dependency issues. No new matter is added by way of these amendments.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 4, 6-12, 15, 17-20, and 23-24 include allowable subject matter.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-3, 5, 13, 14, 16, 21, and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Publication No. 2005/0204040 (“Ferri”) in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2005/0108714 (“Geye”). Claims 3, 5, and 13 have been cancelled by way of this reply. To the extent this rejection applies to the pending claims, the rejection is respectfully traversed.

MPEP § 2143 states that “[t]he key to supporting any rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103 is the clear articulation of the reason(s) why the claimed invention would have been obvious. The Supreme Court in KSR noted that the analysis supporting a rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103 should be made explicit.” Further, when combining prior art elements, the Examiner “must articulate the following: (1) a finding that the prior art included each element claimed, although not necessarily in a single prior art reference, with the only difference between the claimed invention and the prior art being the lack of actual combination of the elements in a single prior art reference....” MPEP § 2143(A).

As discussed above, independent claims 1, 16, and 21 have been amended to include allowable subject matter as indicated by the Examiner. Accordingly, Ferri and Geye fail to teach or suggest each element of amended independent claims 1, 16, and 21. Thus, the claims are now patentable over Ferri and Geye. Further, claims 2, 14, and 22 depend from independent claims 1,

16, and 21, respectively, and are patentable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, this rejection is traversed and withdrawal is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Applicants believe this reply is fully responsive to all outstanding issues and places this application in condition for allowance. If this belief is incorrect, or other issues arise, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned or his associates at the telephone number listed below. Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account 50-0591 (Reference Number 03226/383001).

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Respectfully submitted,

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